

In the Specification:

Please amend paragraph [0063] as follows:

The invention further provides a metal ion affinity peptide, wherein the affinity peptide has the formula $(\text{His-X}_1\text{-X}_2)_n$, (SEQ ID NO:23) wherein each of X_1 and X_2 is an amino acid having an acidic side chain, and $n=3$ to 10. In one embodiment, the affinity peptide comprises the sequence $(\text{His-Asp-Asp})_6$ (**SEQ ID NO:02**). In another embodiment, the affinity peptide comprises the sequence $(\text{His-Glu-Glu})_6$ (**SEQ ID NO:03**). In a further embodiment, the affinity peptide comprises the sequence $(\text{His-Asp-Glu})_6$ (**SEQ ID NO:04**). In a further embodiment, the affinity peptide comprises the sequence $(\text{His-Glu-Asp})_6$ (**SEQ ID NO:05**).